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ABSTRACT

Sixteen guideline recommendations developed by an experiential education advisory panel are presented. Policy guidelines are intended for use in developing experiential education programs. Each issue is briefly delineated; major points that were offered for the panel's consideration are highlighted. The issue statements concern the following areas: learner objectives, site selection, evaluation, structure for learning, diversity of experiences, identification of learners, access to various employment levels, program expansion, commitment to programs, worker protection, legal requirements, paid experiences, academic credit, employment credit, preparation of educational personnel, and preparation of workplace personnel. Immediately following each issue statement is the panel's guideline recommendation including the rationale, safeguard, and potential benefits. For example, the first recommendation is that experiential education goals should be translated into specific learner objectives and should be stated in terms that reflect shared understanding among all participants. (CSS)

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Research and Development Series No. 160

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION POLICY GUIDELINES

Developed by

Experiential Education Advisory Panel

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1979

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Final Report on the
Experiential Learning Issues and Guidelines Project
Conducted Under NIE Contract No. 400-77-0055

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FOREWORD

Many recent educational practices involve the total community as a site and resource for learning. These out-of-school learning enterprises enable learners to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes and prepare learners for participation in a variety of life roles. Recognizing the value of learning by direct experiences in the real world, individuals from labor, management, education, and the general community have been working together to design and implement successful experiential education programs in the world of work. While a number of excellent programs already exist, providing high quality experiential learning opportunities presents a continuing challenge to all participants.

This report is part of a study of policy issues in experiential education. As a result of discussing and clarifying selected issues, guideline recommendations for experiential education were developed. The project's advisory panel was instrumental in clarifying the issues and developing the recommendations. The National Center is indebted to the panel members for their conscientious efforts and for the time they gave to the project. For their contributions to this study, acknowledgment is given to: Herbert Levine, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, who served as panel chairperson; Marla Batchelder, Union Carbide Corporation; Joseph Bertotti, General Electric Company; William Brooks, General Motors Corporation; Scott Detrick, National School Boards Association; Walter Dorosh, United Auto Workers; Kenneth Edwards, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Charles Heatherly, National Federation of Independent Business; Robert Lipscomb, National Education Association; Richard Mc Allister, Retail Clerks International Union; Dorothy Shields, AFL-CIO; Cecil Smith, National Urban League; Beverly Stanton, U.S. Conference of Mayors; John Swann, Recruitment and Training Program; Scott Thomson, National Association of Secondary School Principals; Gail Trapnell, American Vocational Association; James Ward, American Federation of Teachers; and the *ex-officio* panel members: Evelyn Ganzglass, U.S. Department of Labor; Justine Rodriguez and Susan Nevas, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Appreciation must also be given to the many students and experiential education program coordinators who assisted in this study. Marcia Freedman, Columbia University; Mary Klaurens, University of Minnesota; Thomas Owens, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; and Harry Silberman, University of California, Los Angeles served as reviewers of this document. We thank them for their helpful comments and suggestions. David Hampson, Chief of the National Institute of Education's Career Exploration Division, initiated this study and Ronald Bucknam and Robert Harris served as Project Officers for the study; we thank them for their guidance and support.

Recognition is due Richard Miguel for his overall direction of the project and for the preparation of this report; Deborah Coleman for coordinating the literature reviews; Louise Wasson for gathering information about the experiential programs; Jeanette McConaughy, for editing the report; and Kay Freeman for secretarial support services.

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SUMMARY

This report is a result of the collective efforts of the project's advisory panel and the project staff. The policy issues presented are by no means the only ones of interest to the panel but represent important issues that could be considered within the time frame of the project.

The principal outcome of the project was the development of guideline recommendations by the advisory panel. These recommendations are intended for use and adaptation by individuals involved in the policy-making and planning aspects of experiential education programs. While the recommendations should be most helpful to all participants involved in starting new programs, they can also be of use in more established programs.

The terms used in the study are explained briefly.

- *Experiential learning* refers to the process of learning about work and other life roles by studying, observing, and performing them in any environment (usually outside the school) where those roles occur.

- *Experiential education* refers to planned educational experiences designed to enable learners to acquire attitudes, skills, and knowledge for work and other life roles by participating in work settings. This is an inclusive term incorporating all programs that depend upon experiential learning as a principal learning process. This study focuses primarily on work-oriented experiential education.

- *Program* refers to any organized effort to effect experiential education. It may be referred to as a program or, for example, it may be part of a course or existing program in a school.

- *Learners* refer to the individuals for whom the experiential program is intended.

- *Participants* refer to all persons involved in an experiential program, namely, learners, parents, labor and management representatives, program staff, and teachers, administrators, counselors, and other school personnel.

The following are the guideline recommendations developed by the panel. The rationale, safeguards, and potential benefits for each guideline are detailed within this report.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION POLICY GUIDELINES

1	LEARNER OBJECTIVES	Experiential education goals should be translated into specific learner objectives and should be stated in terms that reflect shared understanding among all participants. Criteria for evaluating the objectives are part of this shared understanding.
2	SITE SELECTION	Experiential learning sites should be developed for programs on the basis of the potential for delivering long-term personal, social, educational or career-development benefits.
3	EVALUATION	Evaluation should be a continuous process involving all participants; this process should be conducted according to terms and procedures established in the planning stages.
4	STRUCTURE FOR LEARNING	Experiential learning should be structured to stimulate learning through meaningful activities, including opportunities for reflection and interpretation.
5	DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES	The learner's overall set of experiential education opportunities should include a diversity of learning and work experiences.
6	IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS	All learners should have the opportunity to participate in programs and should be involved in determining their assignments. Participation should be based on a clear and shared understanding of certain factors: (1) the skills, knowledge, and attitudes the learner is expected to develop; (2) the learner's need, readiness, and capacity for developing them; and (3) availability of resources and opportunities.
7	ACCESS TO VARIOUS EMPLOYMENT LEVELS	Experiential learning opportunities should be developed at various employment levels within community work sites.
8	PROGRAM EXPANSION	Experiential learning opportunities should be developed gradually, expanding only after pilot programs have demonstrated success.
9	COMMITMENT TO PROGRAMS	Cooperating organizations should be encouraged to sustain their involvement over given periods of time. The nature and extent of this commitment should be agreed upon in the planning stages by all involved.
10	WORKER PROTECTION	The presence of experiential learners in the workplace should not result in the displacement of workers. If the work force is reduced while a program is in effect, any required reductions in experiential learners or other program modifications should be made according to terms agreed upon in the planning stages.

11 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

All persons responsible for experiential programs should be thoroughly familiar with legal requirements and ramifications as they apply to experiential learners.

12 PAID EXPERIENCES

Salary issues should be cooperatively decided upon by all parties involved in the program, working within the context of the appropriate laws, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements.

13 ACADEMIC CREDIT

The criteria for granting credit to learners for participation in experiential education programs should be agreed upon in the planning stages by teachers, administrators, program staff, and the agency granting the credit.

14 EMPLOYMENT CREDIT

Credit for previous experience in experiential education programs should be considered by labor and management.

15 PREPARATION OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

Educational personnel associated with the program should be given a thorough understanding of the work settings, the potential of the learners' experiences, and their own roles in assisting the learners to achieve the program purposes. Participating organizations should assume full responsibility for the training, compensation, and recognition of all personnel who implement the program.

16 PREPARATION OF WORKPLACE PERSONNEL

Personnel from the workplace, who are called upon to interact with experiential learners should receive comprehensive orientation to their roles in experiential education. Collaboration between these workers and the program staff should be maintained on a systematic basis for the duration of the program. Participating organizations should assume full responsibility for the adequate training, compensation, and recognition of all personnel who implement the program.

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SPECIAL NOTE TO READER

The use of the generic term *experiential education programs* is meant to include programs such as experience-based academic programs (e.g., Experience-Based Career Education); cooperative vocational education programs (e.g., secondary school cooperative distributive education); service learning programs (e.g., programs under the auspices of the National Commission on Resources for Youth); employment, training, and educational motivation programs (e.g., CETA Youth Programs, 70001, Ltd.); apprenticeship programs (e.g., The School to Work Initiative Program); general work experience programs; and career exploration programs (e.g., The Executive High School Internships Program). Information regarding these and other programs can be found in another publication of this project: *Experiential Education: A Primer on Programs.*

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, institutions in the educational sector and the society at large are becoming involved in expanding educational environments beyond schooling. These efforts, often referred to as experiential education, require the collaboration of representatives from labor, management, education, and community organizations. This study examines policy issues and provides guidelines that can be useful in collaborative efforts for experiential education.

Experiential Education Defined

The term *experiential education* takes on meaning when it is applied to a particular area of educational pursuit. When individuals enter work environments for the purposes of (1) acquiring knowledge and skills for given occupations or (2) enhancing their own career development through observing and performing work experiences or (3) improving their own decision-making skills through studying the social context of work, they are learning experientially. Hence, experiential learning means learning about work and other life roles by studying, observing, and performing them, and it involves expanding educational environments to places where those roles occur.

This study primarily concerns experiential education which consists of planned educational activities embodying experiential learning as the principal learning process. The following is the operational definition of experiential education used by this project.

> *Experiential education is a set of planned educational experiences designed to enable learners to acquire attitudes, skills, and knowledge for work and other life roles by participating in work settings.*

Background and the Problem

Both in- and out-of-school educational experiences contribute to an accurate perception and total development of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge individuals need for their careers. The recognition of this fact has led to the development of many programs which have an experiential learning component. These programs seek to capitalize upon the learning potential that can be derived from experiences in the work sectors of our society (both paid and volunteer work).

But educational programs that are conducted outside of schools and use experiential learning as the principal educational process can encounter policy issues difficult to deal with. This is so because of the difficulties involved in creating structures for learning in environments that have other purposes. Because workplaces outside the school are not structured as educational environments, they can present unusual and unfamiliar challenges to those who want to implement an experiential education program. Part of the problem lies in the immensity of the task—both its scope and its manageability, but it also resides in the convergence of the many participants associated with the effort—and their diverse motives, perspectives, values, and varying levels of familiarity with and sophistication in carrying out their roles. Collaboration required for policy setting and decision making brings together persons from various sectors (e.g., management, labor, education), some of whom do not fully appreciate each other's perspectives nor fully comprehend the problems involved in fusing education and work experiences.

Consequently, the introduction of experiential education interventions into workplaces requires: (1) an understanding of the policy issues concerning experiential education, and (2) the determination of policy guidelines for creating experiential opportunities and for setting parameters for their implementation.

Purposes and Objectives

Seeing the need for clarification of current and emerging policy issues, the National Institute of Education (NIE) requested that a study be undertaken by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education to develop policy guidelines for future experiential education programs. The principal objectives of this study were as follows:

- To clarify issues concerning experiential education
- To propose recommendations for use as policy guidelines

Before detailing the procedures used in this study, it is important to understand the following:

Definition of issue. For the purpose of this study, an *issue* is seen as a matter of concern for which there are differences of opinion and value. We have used *issue* as a point of concern about which there can be legitimate debate.

Selection and clarification of issues. Although this study was to be limited to ten policy issues, sixteen were explored. The issue areas were selected by the project's advisory panel. The project staff in consultation with the advisory panel developed clarification statements for each issue. Information for these statements was obtained from literature reviews, interviews with personnel from various experiential programs, and the project advisory panel members.

Development of guidelines. A requirement of the study was to commission a blue-ribbon panel of ". . . top level, tough minded individuals representing the broad range of actors in the experiential education approach." The responsibility of this panel was to prepare the guidelines based on the identified issues under the direction and advice of the panel chairperson. Because the panel was vital to the success of the project, it was used fully in both an advisory capacity and a developmental capacity (i.e., preparing the guidelines).

Procedures

The project was conducted during the period of July 1, 1977 through November 30, 1978. The following is a calendar of the major events that led toward the development of the guideline recommendations.

July 8, 1977	Selection of advisory panel chairperson.
August 2, 1977	Selection of advisory panel members; identification of other individuals and organizations to provide input for the project.
October 4-5, 1977	First advisory panel meeting held—tentative issues identified.

January 31 and February 1, 1978	Second advisory panel meeting held—issue statements reviewed; format of guidelines approved; subcommittees formed.
April and May 1978	Advisory panel subcommittees met—issue statements critiqued; guideline recommendation developed.
April 24-25, 1978	First reactor group workshop held—program coordinators and students reviewed issue statements and guideline recommendations.
May 22-23, 1978	Second reactor group workshop held—policy makers from sixteen experiential programs reviewed issue statements and guideline recommendations and provided insights into program policies.
June 6, 1978	Third advisory panel meeting held—guideline recommendations finalized.
November 16-17, 1978	Invitational Conference held.

Each of the above events is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Establishing the Advisory Panel

Representatives from NIE and the project staff and Dr. Herbert A. Levine, the project's advisory panel chairperson, met at the National Center to select the members of the advisory panel. It was decided that: (1) broad representation from management, labor, education, and community groups at a national level would be most desirable; (2) four representatives from each group would be selected; and (3) representatives from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and from the Department of Labor should serve as *ex-officio* members. A complete list of the advisory panel members can be found on page *iv.*

Identification of Issues

At its second meeting, the advisory panel agreed upon sixteen issue areas: clarifying intended outcomes; developing experiential opportunities; structuring experiences; diversifying experiences; assessing effectiveness; identifying experiential learners; creating a diverse array of experiences; paying experiential learners; expanding experiential education; maintaining commitment; worker displacement; observing legal requirements; granting credit; recognizing experiences for their marketable value; preparing educational personnel; and preparing personnel from the workplace. The project staff made site visits to various programs, interviewed experiential educators, reviewed the literature pertinent to the issues, and assembled two reactor groups: (1) program coordinators and students, and (2) program policy makers (see Appendix).

Guideline Recommendations

The panel was divided into three subcommittees which met twice to develop guideline recommendations and to provide guidance to the staff in formulating the related discussion of the issues. At the panel's third meeting, the guideline recommendations were reviewed and final modifications

were made. This document, which contains those issue statements and guideline recommendations, was written and subsequently reviewed by the advisory panel, substantive experts in experiential education and related fields, and the National Institute of Education's Project Officer.

Invitational Conference

The issue statements and guideline recommendations were presented and discussed at an invitational conference on November 16-17, 1978. This conference provided suggestions on the various uses of the guideline recommendations. Conference presenters were alumni of experiential education programs, program coordinators, labor and management representatives, researchers, and representatives from major experiential education organizations. The presenters addressed the issue themes and the importance of the guidelines; they also provided examples from practice. The conference proceedings can be found in another publication of this project.

Summary

The Experiential Education Advisory Panel met as a total group three times. Subcommittees of the panel met an additional two times. During these meetings panel members considered and debated various aspects of selected policy issues and, as a result, produced their guideline recommendations. The remainder of this report presents those issues and guidelines.

ISSUES AND GUIDELINE RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy issues investigated in this study were chosen by the project's advisory panel for consideration in developing guideline recommendations. Although these issue areas are by no means the only issues of interest to the panel, they do represent those issues that were addressed within the time frame of the project.

The following assumptions were made in regard to the issues and recommended guidelines included in this section:

1. Flexible approaches to a policy issue are desirable.
2. Solutions to any issue should be arrived at through collaboration.
3. Policy issues are wide ranging and vital to those affected, creating diverse interests.
4. A policy guideline should take into account the impact on all groups involved.
5. Policy making accommodates both democratic expectations of constituencies and the ultimate merits of the outcomes of policy decisions.

Overview of the Issue Areas

The specific issues and guideline recommendations evolved from an investigation of six general issue areas: objectives and outcomes, characteristics of experiential learning, selection and opportunities, impact on the workplace, certifying learning and work experiences, and preparing personnel. These general issue areas will be discussed briefly to provide background for the issues and guideline recommendations considered in the advisory panel's deliberations.

Objectives and Outcomes

The principal common factor of all experiential education programs is their use of experiential learning as the educational process. Programs can differ considerably from one another, however, depending on their particular purposes and objectives. Five major groupings of these programs have been identified according to intended outcomes: (1) career development; (2) personal growth; (3) academic and life-skill development; (4) job-skill development; and (5) youth employment. There is also considerable variation within these categories, which becomes obvious as one looks at the specific objectives and requirements of the various programs. The point to be made here is that experiential education programs are more individual than they are alike, and generalities applied to them will have to be weighed in terms of true relevance. Despite their differences, however, they share a number of problems and concerns relating to their achievement of the intended outcomes.

Design of the experiences should begin with the objectives, deriving the necessary procedures and resources from an analysis of those objectives. However, it is not always easy to create a good match between intended learner outcomes and appropriate experiences to attain those outcomes, an area of uncertainty for many programs. Frequently, insufficient attention has been given to three aspects of the problem: (1) achieving a clear understanding of program outcomes by all participants; (2) developing realistic expectations; and (3) knowing what effects a given experience will have on specific outcomes.

Despite the desirability of any of the intended outcomes, however, the ultimate question is whether or not there is sufficient value in experiential learning to justify the expenditures of time and money. Which programs are cost effective in achieving their outcomes? Which outcomes are impractical from a cost-effective standpoint? Are long-term benefits available? These and other questions must be answered.

In summary the gaps most in need of attention lie in the following areas: (1) determining realistic and attainable outcomes; (2) understanding alternative experiences for achieving outcomes; and (3) workable criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the experiences. Guideline recommendations 1, 2, and 3 relate to these issue areas.

Characteristics of Experiential Learning

Much effort is directed toward developing experiential learning assignments. However, close examination of the nature and quality of those experiences is needed. Individuals want to amass experiences that are meaningful and useful. There is little incentive on the part of those who engage in the experiences or those who provide them to participate in enterprises of little consequence. Therefore, care must be executed in designing experiential education.

Work experiences are often a more important force in shaping one's career than those of the classroom. But not all experiences will result in positive outcomes. Poor experiences can intensify problems and reinforce negative habits and attitudes. The way in which the situations are perceived by the participants has considerable impact on whether or not skills, habits, and attitudes important in productive work are acquired. Similarly, much depends on the purpose for which the learners are in the program and consequently how they are viewed, that is, as observers, workers, or on-the-job learners.

Part of the problem of assuring high quality experiences lies in the fact that there is considerable variability in the control that program staff have over the experiences. Also, our knowledge regarding what constitutes good experiences is rather embryonic. We need better information to increase our understanding of what these different experiences are and how many are tied into the planned process of education. Guideline recommendations 4 and 5 relate to this issue area.

Selection and Opportunities

Matching experiential learners to appropriate learning opportunities is a challenging task. It involves not only developing a suitable array of experiences but also meeting the needs of a diverse population and determining what experiences are likely to have a long-term impact. There is a predominant feeling among program people that getting learners into the right experiences is crucial. Experienced coordinators in co-op programs, for example, claim that it is the key to success. It is relatively clear that both learner outcomes and the future of the program itself can be affected. For example, mishandling placement can result in undesirable career development, rejection of future learners by employers, and a poor image of the program in the community. Guideline recommendations 6, 7, and 8 relate to this issue area.

Impact on the Workplace

Even though all experiential learners do not participate directly in work experiences, their very presence constitutes an intervention that will be received with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

The number of learners, the diverse nature of the participation, and the long-term relationships of the programs are in a tenuous relationship with the work environment, the expressed purpose of the work enterprise, and the personnel with whom the learners interact. For programs requiring students to engage in real work experiences, the problems can be even greater. Guideline recommendations 9, 10, 11, and 12 relate to this issue area.

Certifying Learning and Work Experiences

Because of the learners' investment of time in experiential education programs, they usually have the expectations of receiving pay, academic credit, or both. These items are considered characteristics of most programs and are usually offered as incentives.

Awarding academic credits for demonstrated skills and knowledge gained directly through the programs is generally acceptable to most persons. However, the kind of credits, how many, and the basis and manner of awarding them is subject to debate.

Because many of the programs do involve considerable direct work experience, it seems only logical that learners should be able to use it as part of their work records. Additionally, under circumstances where new employees receive higher wages or other benefits based on their work experiences, learners' work experiences should be considered.

Guideline recommendations 13 and 14 relate to this issue area.

Preparing Personnel

The process of experiential learning is dependent upon a rich and varied learning environment and upon persons who can stimulate learners to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes from that environment. Both the educational personnel associated with the programs and individuals within the work force are persons from whom the learners can benefit.

Because experiential education programs are designed to achieve a particular set of outcomes, they are dependent upon program personnel and personnel from the workplace, who have a clear understanding of the program and how best to assist learners in achieving those outcomes. The time has come to assure that high quality services are provided. To do this calls for the organization of resources, both human and material, keeping the needs of individuals in mind. Guidelines 15 and 16 relate to this issue area.

Issues and Guidelines

The sixteen guideline recommendations developed by the advisory panel are presented on the following pages. Each issue is briefly delineated, highlighting major points that were offered for the panel's consideration. Immediately following an issue statement is the panel's guideline recommendation.

1 Learner Objectives

NEED FOR CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Objectives for experiential learners vary among the programs, ranging from a few general goals to lengthy lists of specific objectives. Similarly, reasons for differences in stating goals vary. Nevertheless, one of the major purposes of having goals is frequently not met: communicating to all participants what the intended outcomes of the program are. Among the consequences of inadequately communicating program intentions are the following: insufficient or inappropriate uses of human and material resources, disappointment of participants, ineffective feedback, and results that cannot be substantiated—all of which may prevent learners from realizing the full potential of the experiences.

REASONS FOR LACK OF CLARITY

There are three primary reasons for lack of clarity in stating objectives: (1) difficulty in stating some of the learner outcomes; (2) preference for flexibility; and (3) uncertainty in program design or execution. While the explanation for this situation is more complex than can be mentioned here, each of these points can be illustrated briefly.

The desired outcomes of experiential education are seemingly limitless, and some are more difficult to state precisely than others and more subject to multiple interpretations. This is particularly true of attitudinal objectives, such as acquiring good work values and positive self-concepts. The second point to be made is that many consider being specific about objectives inappropriate. Some claim that too much specificity hampers the creativity and spontaneity of the experiences, while others maintain that some desired outcomes are best left unstated because making them explicit may result in loss of support from some participants. Finally, the field of experiential education is a relatively new venture for many participants. While motivated by some general notion of the promise that the experiences hold for learners, these newcomers are not always certain of the program outcomes nor capable of expressing them.

AVOIDING MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Another aspect of the problem resides in the fact that setting goals for experiential education calls for an appreciation of the viewpoints of the various sectors involved in the enterprise. For example, labor, management, educators, and others do not always view the needs of the learners and the prospects of the programs in the same way. Further, communication among the various sectors requires sensitivity to and a complete understanding of the needs of each sector and how these programs can complement those needs.

DETERMINING CRITERIA

The task of stating objectives has too often been viewed as the province of the educators alone. But experiential education is a collaborative effort. In this regard, each participant should have an equal voice in determining the criteria for setting program objectives—a consideration that is often overlooked.

There already exist experiential programs where communication of learner outcomes among participating sectors and learners is done effectively. These programs are described in *Experiential Education: A Primer on Programs.*

Guideline 1

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION GOALS SHOULD BE TRANSLATED INTO SPECIFIC LEARNER OBJECTIVES AND SHOULD BE STATED IN TERMS THAT REFLECT SHARED UNDERSTANDING AMONG ALL PARTICIPANTS. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE OBJECTIVES ARE PART OF THIS SHARED UNDERSTANDING.

RATIONALE

Translating goals into specific objectives lays the groundwork for a shared understanding of what learners can expect to get out of their involvement in experiential education. It also enables persons who provide experiential opportunities to fashion the experiences so that attainment of the objectives becomes a reality. Part of the task of clarifying objectives is to determine the criteria by which those objectives will be evaluated.

Program staff alone cannot be responsible. All persons concerned with the program and the success of its learners must be involved in the process of stating the objectives. This involvement contributes greatly to general understanding of what the program is designed to accomplish.

This recommendation to involve all persons concerned is applicable to all programs; but the degree of specificity and the amount of time spent on this task will vary from program to program.

SAFEGUARD

- Stating objectives in specific terms is often difficult and time-consuming, sometimes requiring special training to expedite the task.
- Becoming too specific may result in easily measured but trivial objectives or in loss of program vitality and flexibility. Care should be taken to see that this does not occur.
- Goal specificity may lead to raised expectations for achievement, but there are no guarantees. All must recognize their responsibilities and their effect on goal attainment.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Experiences can be targeted to achieve objectives.
- Experiential learners and persons interacting with them will have an understanding of their roles.
- Learners will engage in activities purposefully, and experiences will be meaningful and productive.
- Programs can be evaluated properly.

2 Site Selection

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

It is probably safe to say that almost all work-related experiences can be helpful to some individual at some given time. But considerable thought must be given to identifying appropriate experiences for selected learners so that specific objectives may be achieved. This means placing the right learners in the right places at the right times. If this important step is overlooked, learners may experience ineffectual or even detrimental consequences.

Experiential education activities can provide both short-term and long-term benefits. In their special way, they can enable learners to develop occupational competencies, basic skills, self-confidence, desirable work habits, and interpersonal skills. They can also assist in career decision making and career planning but only when the experiences are carefully chosen and designed.

AREAS OF CONCERN

If these experiences are not carefully developed, they can be totally unproductive from an educational viewpoint. From the learner's point of view there are seven areas of undesirable outcomes for which experiential education programs are sometimes criticized: (1) acquiring counter-productive work attitudes or habits; (2) getting experience only on jobs they can get on their own; (3) providing no enhancement of career opportunities or further educational pursuits; (4) training for jobs that are scarce; (5) acquiring a poor on-the-job record; (6) becoming labeled, stigmatized, or stereotyped because of program participation; and (7) focusing only on job-skill development.

Because many occupations are stratified along social class lines, experiential learners who are provided limited opportunities may not get to make the most of their interests and abilities. This is a special concern for experiential learners who seem destined for lower-class jobs and those who have not been reached by traditional school programs. But any learner may become tracked (locked into a job). Those who have a genuine concern for individual choice and respect for a liberal education oppose tracking. Premature limitation of the experiences which prevents achievement of full potential must be avoided.

EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Clearly, experiential education must ultimately lead to improving the lot of the experiential learner. The types of work already available to inexperienced youth are often marginal. Getting learners experiential assignments that ensure growth and maturity, that assist in the transition to adulthood, and that eventually lead to stable, promising jobs is the challenge to all participants.

It may not be possible to start some learners in "better" work experiences, but their experiential assignments should provide for some growth and learning. Whether the purpose is job-oriented or not, programs must develop opportunities which demonstrate that participation results in better outcomes than nonparticipation.

Guideline 2

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SITES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR PROGRAMS ON THE BASIS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR DELIVERING LONG-TERM PERSONAL, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, OR CAREER-DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS.

RATIONALE

Developing experiential learning sites for programs must be done thoughtfully. Each work site may have the potential for experiential learning—but not for everyone and not for every program. As a site is chosen, it should be evaluated in terms of what it can realistically contribute to prospective learners. Personal, social, educational, or career-development needs of participants must be advanced in some way. Programs having career awareness or exploration as their principal purpose seem to have more latitude in this area. However, random placement of participants can be costly in terms of time and resources especially as opportunities become scarce and learners move from one to another aimlessly. For programs with purposes requiring intensive, direct experiences over extended periods of time (e.g., job-skill development), concern for participants receiving long-term benefits increases, since the prospects of multiple experiences are reduced.

SAFEGUARDS

- Some mismatches of learners and experiences are inevitable. Provisions must be made for recognizing and remedying such situations.
- Proper support from and administration by program staff and labor and management representatives and commitment from learners are essential in ensuring the appropriateness of any experiential site.
- Short-term benefits (e.g., securing a temporary job) should not be underestimated. They can be instrumental in advancing one's career as well as meeting immediate needs.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enhance career opportunities.
- Learners will begin to develop a positive work experience record.
- Learners will remove or be able to cope with some of the barriers that are now holding them back.
- Learners will be motivated to acquire education and training.

3 Evaluation

RELIABLE FEEDBACK INFORMATION

The assessment of experiential education is a challenging task for everyone involved in the enterprise. It is also an important task because all participants require reliable feedback information if the experiences are to be effective. To some, assessment is thought of as an isolated event designed to prove that certain outcomes have been achieved, but the assessment of experiential education is more complicated than that.

CURRENT EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

It is reasonably safe to say that no one type of assessment technique has the explicit answer to solving the evaluation problem. Instead there are many approaches to assessment and each type of experiential program, varying by locales, tailors its assessment procedures to meet its own needs. While most programs are aware that improvement is needed, they believe their assessments adequate within the current techniques of evaluation available. But the most cynical critics deem current assessment of experiential education inadequate and believe that it is floundering.

Despite the poor picture portrayed by the critics, considerable progress has been made. For example, Experience-Based Career Education, the Council for the Assessment of Experiential Learning, and Cooperative Vocational Education Departments have been successful in conducting credible evaluations. While they have shown that experiential learning can be assessed with acceptable rigor, several qualifications must be kept in mind. The assessment process must emanate from clearly stated policies and procedures, and it must be conducted by individuals experienced in this area.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

There is no doubt that learners, labor and management representatives, program staff, and other participants need continuous feedback. But it is also quite apparent that all participants ought to participate in the assessment process. Because of the collaborative nature of the programs, it is important that each participant provide and receive assessment data. In this way the data can provide multiple perspectives, ultimately enhancing the role of each participant.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS

The particular method for conducting the assessment will have to be designed to meet the unique needs of an individual program. Sufficient time should be allowed to provide for consideration of possible approaches. Wherever possible, alternative methods of setting standards should be used and the results compared. Once the desired approach is determined, it should be used consistently. These suggestions, emanating from a CAEL study, are also representative of many program participants' thoughts on assessment.

Guideline 3

EVALUATION SHOULD BE A CONTINUOUS PROCESS INVOLVING ALL PARTICIPANTS; THIS PROCESS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO TERMS AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED IN THE PLANNING STAGES.

RATIONALE

Each program will have to design the evaluation process according to those procedures best suited to its purposes and objectives. Many good program-evaluation techniques exist, but the methodologies for evaluating experiential education are just evolving. Evaluation is a difficult task and one often unappreciated by many. Nevertheless, each program must capitalize on the opportunity to involve all participating parties in helping to guide and direct the learner's growth and in the continuous improvement of the programs. The criteria for evaluating program effectiveness should be determined during the planning stages, but planning and evaluation are viewed here as continuous processes, the various stages of which should refine and augment the criteria.

SAFEGUARDS

- Techniques may have to be developed to train individuals for their roles in the evaluation process.
- Care must be taken to develop appropriate processes for experiential learning.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Everyone involved in the programs will understand what needs to be done to achieve objectives and what corrective actions need to be made for the benefit of the learners.
- Learners will receive continuous feedback to help them better achieve their objectives.
- Learners will develop skill in self-evaluation.
- Programs will improve as everyone contributes to the evaluation process.

4 Structure for Learning

DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

One aim of experiential education is to make learning activities meaningful. Youth are concerned about their success in adult work roles. Consequently, they will enthusiastically engage in most work activities which provide a challenge and an opportunity to apply new-found knowledge and skills. Further, the experiences must provide the learner with a sense of achievement and success. Therefore, consideration must be given to structure the experiences to include motivation and success factors.

EMPTY EXPERIENCES

Certainly no one advocates meaningless experiences, but it is not uncommon to find experiential learners in situations that demand little of them. In some programs many participants are not expected to do very much, and consequently they gain very little. For them it is simply a "holding action." Still others are placed in potentially meaningful experiences but are mindless of the educational value of the opportunities. In both instances, structure is needed to promote purposeful behavioral change.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

The total gamut of experiential education offerings includes a wide variety of activities that can be beneficial and worth the time and money spent on them. However, one needs to answer questions such as: How can appropriate sequence and timing of the experiences be achieved? Do the experiences vary for different learners? What additional learning activities are required to complement the work experiences? When and how frequently are direct experiences preferable to in-school experiences? What do learners need to know as they move from one type of experience to another?

REFLECTION AND INTERPRETATION

Most, but not all, programs recognize the need to provide for reflection as part of the experience. Through seminars and counseling sessions learners gain insights that may never be achieved through the experiences alone. For example, some learners may not agree with the rules and standards governing their work experiences. Having the opportunity to reflect on the problem and discuss it with others may help them resolve what would otherwise be a negative experience. A more significant benefit of reflection is that it enables individuals to learn those things which are difficult to learn experientially in a short span of time. Because they have designed experiences to include opportunities for reflection and interpretation, certain programs have enabled learners to approach their full potential.

Experiential programs that provide worthwhile experiences spend considerable time in careful planning, development, monitoring, and follow-up. Other programs that are *laissez-faire* on this score leave much to chance and seem likely to result in disappointment and even cynicism for all the participants. Although it is a time-consuming task, structuring the experiences seems well worth the effort.

Guideline 4

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SHOULD BE STRUCTURED TO STIMULATE LEARNING THROUGH MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION AND INTERPRETATION.

RATIONALE

The quality of experiential education depends on the extent to which learners realize the full educational potential of the experiences they undertake. Merely placing learners in experiential learning settings and leaving them to their own devices to learn something from the experiences is likely to fall short of the mark for most individuals. Strategies for achieving the learner objectives of the programs should be planned openly, honestly, and thoroughly with input from all participants. These same individuals must continue to communicate in guiding the progress of the experiences and providing whatever follow-up assistance is needed. This recommendation is applicable to all experiential programs.

SAFEGUARDS

- The experiences should be structured to stimulate creativity and enhance individuality. The structure should be flexible enough to enable learners to capitalize on unanticipated opportunities as they emerge and to encourage them to develop creatively the experiences they undertake.
- Structuring experiences to bring out the full educational potential may require more time and personnel than are available. The structuring process will have to take these factors into consideration.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will engage in experiences that are appropriate to their development.
- Learners will be able to interpret their experiences.
- Learners will undergo experiences well integrated with other educational experiences.
- Learners will gain a measure of control over educational experiences affecting their futures.

5 Diversity of Experiences

NEED FOR DIVERSITY

Many experiential education programs favor diversity of experiences, finding that diversity stimulates learning, encourages career exploration, and ensures a wide range of skills, knowledge, and attitudes on the part of the learners. When diversity is not considered in designing the experiences, learners may find themselves in situations where their activities become routine, boring, and nonproductive from a learning and career-development standpoint.

BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY

Diverse experiences are desirable for two fundamental reasons. First, learners require activities that provide motivation and reinforcement, and experiences that allow them to engage in a variety of activities which help them develop multiple talents and interests. By applying themselves to diverse tasks, learners become self-confident and less threatened by the challenges of the workplace. Because true self-confidence is gained from competence in performance, moving the learner from one activity to another must be done thoughtfully. Learners faced with a variety of work experiences for career-awareness purposes need a planned approach to serve as a guide.

Secondly, diversity develops in the learner an awareness of the multiple applications of occupational skills. Since today's workers may face several career changes in a lifetime, it is important for them to appreciate the use of similar skills in different work contexts. They also need to develop an appreciation for the interdependence of the different jobs constituting the work force.

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

As learners experience different activities, they should be exposed to the same conditions regular workers face whenever possible. Otherwise, the work experiences will not be authentic nor will learners gain a true perspective. Although the balance inherent in the relationship between learner and worker roles is often tenuous, experiential learners must develop a clear picture of the total work environment: conditions and standards of the workplace; legal requirements; rules of conduct; safety precautions; and other aspects. Similarly, the process of determining appropriate experiential activities must be based on collective bargaining agreements (where they exist) and on what is expected of employees on the job.

While it may be difficult and costly to provide learners with diverse experiences, participants should make every possible attempt to develop them. The long-term benefits to the learners and, consequently, to work establishments should be well worth the effort.

The determination of what constitutes appropriate diversity must begin with an analysis built around the needs of the learner. Meeting these needs for diversity becomes the real challenge for all those who provide the experiential learning opportunities.

Guideline 5

THE LEARNER'S OVERALL SET OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD INCLUDE A DIVERSITY OF LEARNING AND WORK EXPERIENCES.

RATIONALE

A vast array of experiential learning opportunities exists. This diversity is found not only in the variety of work but also in the kinds of learning experiences available to individuals. From the standpoint of human development, it is important for learners to be exposed to as much diversity as is appropriate and beneficial. The timing of diverse experiences, determined by joint planning, will depend upon the purposes of specific programs and developmental needs of the participants. The concern here is to encourage individuals to be versatile and flexible in terms of career decisions and preparation and to deter them from becoming locked into career paths unnecessarily. Diversity is the hallmark of experiential programs having career awareness and exploration as their purpose, but this recommendation recognizes diversity as an integral and important part of all experiential education.

SAFEGUARDS

- Too much diversity may cause confusion in career decision making or shallowness in career preparation. Care must be taken to ensure its proper place in a total experiential education program.
- After routine experiences, which may be a desirable starting point for some learners, experiences should become increasingly diverse and challenging.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Diverse experiences will provide an excellent basis for career decision making.
- Diverse experiences will contribute to the development of transferable skills.
- Diversity will serve as a catalyst, motivating participants to get the most out of their experiences.

6 Identification of Learners

MATCHING LEARNERS WITH OPPORTUNITIES

There are those who believe that any learner can benefit from almost any experience and that those most in need should acquire all the experience possible. However, programs vary considerably, and different experiences require varying levels of readiness for participation. For this reason, a sensitive approach to matching learners with work-related learning opportunities is needed.

The importance of identifying prospective learners and securing appropriate experiences for them can be viewed from two vantage points. Most significantly, program sponsors want learners to benefit from the experiences. Since experiential education requires a substantial investment of all participants' time, learners should be at a stage of readiness to benefit from participation, and the experiences should have the capacity for developing the learners. The second concern emanates from the desire to make the program a success. Careful identification of learners can contribute to making this objective a reality.

IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

The basis for identifying learners and matching them with learning experiences consists of both formal and informal measures of their vocational interests and aspirations, their needs and abilities, and their readiness in terms of career, intellectual, and social development. A case can be made for any of these approaches. However, none is without problems. For example, while random assignments have often ended in disappointment, precise job analysis and thorough diagnoses of learners' needs and abilities have not been particularly satisfactory either. Use of tests and other screening devices has frequently been unsuccessful. Interviewing has often proved to be not only time-consuming but also ineffective because of lack of appropriate techniques or trained personnel. This brief discussion of the problems can be no more than illustrative, for the problems and the attending circumstances are far too complex. But the situation is hopeful. Program staff are improving identification procedures. They are becoming more sophisticated about what works—and more importantly, what does not. They are also becoming more sensitive to differences in learners and in work situations.

DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS

One problem area still presenting a challenge is that of providing experiential opportunities to individuals who lack knowledge, basic work skills, and positive attitudes. These disadvantaged persons are often unable to benefit from many of the experiential programs, though some individuals will be more likely to benefit than others. Those individuals in the greatest need should be given equal consideration, but how to accommodate learners who cannot benefit greatly from many opportunities remains a mystery. This problem will not be solved easily, but one solution to be avoided is patterning selection processes after those used in industry. In most cases, these practices are inappropriate for experiential programs, supposedly designed for educational purposes and not for employer recruitment and temporary work-force augmentation.

Identification of learners and matching them with educationally productive experiences are crucial initial steps in developing successful experiential programs. They must be executed effectively and fairly with due consideration for both the learners and those who provide the opportunities.

Guideline 6

ALL LEARNERS SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS AND SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN DETERMINING THEIR ASSIGNMENTS. PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE BASED ON A CLEAR AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CERTAIN FACTORS: (1) THE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND ATTITUDES THE LEARNER IS EXPECTED TO DEVELOP; (2) THE LEARNER'S NEED, READINESS, AND CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPING THEM; AND (3) AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

RATIONALE

Experiential education opportunities should be open to all who want and need them. However, the selection of participants cannot be done on an open-enrollment basis for all programs. At least two considerations are pertinent here. First, every program cannot be expected to provide an infinite number of experiential learning opportunities. Secondly, and more importantly, the benefits to be derived from any experience depend upon the readiness of the prospective learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for which the program is designed.

Because some experiential education opportunities require more preparation than others, the timing of experiences is critical. Prospective learners who are not ready to benefit from a specific program should be counseled in terms of the prerequisite skills, knowledge, and attitudes required and how they should go about developing them.

Experiential assignments are limited, of course, by the resources available and the capacity of the community to provide the experiential opportunities.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Programs will develop linkages with other programs to make counseling and referrals a reality.
- Counseling and referrals should become available to any applicants not yet ready or able to benefit from the program.
- Learners will be encouraged to develop the capacities required for targeted experiences.
- Learners will become realistic in their choices of experiential programs.
- Learners will recognize the sequence of experiential education required to fulfill career plans.
- The application/selection process will become a learning experience in itself.

7 Access to Various Employment Levels

GAINING ACCESS

Most experiential learning opportunities are in occupational areas where youth and other inexperienced workers are usually employed as clerical, sales, and factory workers; as laborers; and as workers in service occupations. These opportunities are less likely to be found in occupations where mature workers are the dominant group. If experiential education were designed only for entry-level job preparation, then the situation might be acceptable. But when all the objectives of experiential education are taken into consideration, the objectives indicate a need for access to a broader range of occupations than many work organizations are presently willing to offer.

THE NEEDS VARY

Experiential programs vary widely in purpose and therefore in need for access to different employment levels. Experiential education for career awareness and exploration requires a number of different opportunities, ideally covering all jobs and occupations. Even when learners have selected a specific job for in-depth exploration, they should be exposed to jobs that lead up to and go beyond that position. This range affords a better career perspective for their present experiences. Experiential education involving training for a specific job often demands a considerable investment of time. Complementing that experience requires exploratory experiences in related jobs at a comparable level and at higher levels for skill transferability and career perspective.

LIMITS OF MEETING THE NEEDS

While it may be ideal to open up all work experiences to experiential learners, doing so may not always be practicable. Each program and work organization will have to determine the feasibility of expanding options at different employment levels. And when experiences are made available, they may have to be limited in order to prevent undesirable disruption of the work productivity of the cooperating organizations.

Because many youths and other inexperienced workers have little first-hand contact with the world of work and the various positions they may hold in the future, it is important that they have exposure to the entire spectrum of employment opportunity. It is the province of experiential education to meet this need.

Guideline 7

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AT VARIOUS EMPLOYMENT LEVELS WITHIN COMMUNITY WORK SITES.

RATIONALE

Experiential education is concerned with career opportunities that include, but go beyond, preparation for entry-level jobs. Since a first reaction from employers may be that experiential learners are not ready to participate in higher-level occupations, they should be made aware of the many purposes the programs serve. For example, many experiential learners can develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes better if they have a clear sense of career direction. This entails being able to explore multiple facets of careers that may be open to them in the distant future. Having access to as many employment levels as possible will provide the information learners need to make wise decisions and to pursue their own career direction. While it may be appropriate to start some learners at lower levels, it would be inappropriate to leave them there.

SAFEGUARDS

- Learners placed with workers at high employment levels should be given a clear and complete understanding of the responsibilities involved in careers at these levels to ensure their realistic expectations of such jobs.
- Labor and management representatives should be made aware of how various program purposes can be met by exposing learners to different employment levels.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will be able to determine their compatibility with persons at various employment levels.
- Learners will become aware of work environments and requirements at various levels and will be able to determine whether work under those conditions is desirable to them.
- Learners will be able to determine what skills, knowledge, and attitudes they will need if they aspire to levels higher than they are now ready to enter.
- Learners will be able to associate with and learn from mature workers.
- Mature workers will be made aware of the talents of younger workers.

8 Program Expansion

EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES

Almost every type of work can provide opportunities for experiential learning, but the feasibility of creating an ever-expanding number of experiential opportunities is subject to debate. Surveys have revealed a range of opinion. At one extreme are those who say that only a small fraction of youths can be offered experiential education in the private sector. Conversely, others maintain that experiential opportunities can be expanded substantially and are expected to increase. But the essential question of supply and demand implied here is a relative one: what is the saturation point for organizations in providing opportunities, and how responsive can they be to program requests?

REASONABLE REQUESTS

The increasing numbers of experiential programs are making many varied demands on personnel time and services within work organizations. These requests are necessary if the experiential education objectives set forth by the programs are to be met. Labor and management are now being sought more than ever for their cooperation and expertise, and each new program approaches a work organization with what seems to be reasonable requests. In most cases they are reasonable, but the combined requests of all the programs can become more than the work organization can reasonably be expected to undertake.

While most work organizations recognize the desirability of participating in a program, each organization may set limits on the number of learners they will accept and may impose conditions under which they will accept them. For example, one organization may require learners to meet minimum entry-level job qualifications; another may not allow learners to become directly involved in the work activities; still others will accept a limited number of learners on a trial basis only. These requirements will vary not only from organization to organization, but also from program to program, within one organization.

COORDINATING THE REQUESTS

In cities where experiential education programs place heavy demands on business and industry, strategies have emerged to coordinate the flow of requests between the programs and the work organizations. Some school systems have established clearing houses for requests; others have set up a network through which programs can contact work organizations; in several localities both business and schools have provided full-time personnel to work out the problems. In situations where experiential education is just beginning to take hold, experience indicates that controlled growth of programs is desirable and especially important in developing and maintaining positive relationships among sectors and in achieving quality in the program itself.

Guideline 8

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED GRADUALLY, EXPANDING ONLY AFTER PILOT PROGRAMS HAVE DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS.

RATIONALE

All participants will be more receptive if they see that the program is sensibly planned. Gradual development of experiential education offerings should lead to effective use of community resources and should ensure positive relationships between programs and community organizations. Controlled growth of experiential education offerings is in the best interest of everyone concerned, especially the learners. Programs that act irresponsibly in this area can undo much that has already been accomplished and can jeopardize the future of other programs. After thorough evaluation of pilot programs has been conducted, the data from these evaluations will indicate whether expansion is warranted.

SAFEGUARD

- Agreement on success criteria must be established in planning stages.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will be placed in experiential learning assignments having high probability for growth and development.
- The placing of experiential learners into the workplace gradually will create a receptive atmosphere because such a process will not disrupt existing operations of management and labor.
- Community resources will be developed effectively.

9 Commitment to Programs

NEED FOR COMMITMENT

Experiential education programs are dependent upon the support and assistance of a number of cooperating organizations. Without the learning sites provided by community workplaces, these programs would cease to function. Therefore, it is the responsibility of cooperating organizations not only to provide the experiential learning opportunities but also to maintain their involvement for the period to which they are committed.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING SUPPORT

For a variety of reasons, participating work organizations sometimes withdraw their commitment, and as a result programs have to curtail or suspend their activities. Among reasons given for withdrawal are the following: (1) decrease in productivity; (2) economic setbacks; and (3) labor surpluses resulting from high unemployment. But unstated reasons also account for withdrawal of commitment. Programs poorly planned or managed can cause disturbances in the flow of work activities. Learners may fail to measure up to the expectations imposed upon them. Learners may prove to be a burden to mature workers, requiring too much supervision time or training. Labor and management may decide to invest their time, efforts, and support in other activities considered more beneficial to youth.

IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING

But the prospect of losing commitment from participating organizations need not be a threat. Many programs have been sustained for years even under hardships caused by declining profits and lay-offs. The key to continued commitment can be found in the planning stages in the agreements made by participating organizations. Most work organizations can project business profit and loss factors sufficiently into the future to indicate how long they can remain involved with the program. In addition, many program objectives can continue to be met regardless of the employment picture. While some features may have to be modified or curtailed, programs need not be suspended.

RECIPROCAL COMMITMENTS

In essence, programs cannot survive without commitment from cooperating organizations, but commitment is a reciprocal matter. The programs must abide by the agreements made and must strive to accomplish the goals established by mutual agreement with the participating organizations.

Guideline 9

COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO SUSTAIN THEIR INVOLVEMENT OVER GIVEN PERIODS OF TIME. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THIS COMMITMENT SHOULD BE AGREED UPON IN THE PLANNING STAGES BY ALL INVOLVED.

RATIONALE

Experiential education programs must have the continued support and participation of cooperating organizations. Success for the programs is doubtful if the relationship with the organizations they rely upon is tenuous. For this reason, cooperating organizations should accept commitment to the program as part of the agreement, and program developers should provide for gradually increasing participation on the part of these organizations. Most organizations, by advance planning, can make commitments for specific periods of time, ensuring completion of the experiences for a specific number of learners. Increasing or decreasing the number of entering learners will be subject to business upturns or reversals and so must be renegotiated periodically. The duration of each commitment will have to be agreed upon as well as the terms for continuing the relationship. This recommendation applies especially to experiential programs in which learners are paid for their work experiences.

SAFEGUARDS

- Alternative plans should be available if the work force is reduced and experiential learners are remaining at the same level.
- Program staff should work closely with cooperating organizations, considering their future involvement in long-range plans.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will be assured of completing their experiential assignments.
- Advanced notice of inability to honor a commitment will enable program staff to secure other experiential learning sites for future learners.
- Employers will be able to decrease participation amicably if business conditions become unfavorable.

10 Worker Protection

EASING LEARNERS INTO THE WORKPLACE

The prospect of bringing experiential learners into workplaces will sometimes be met with enthusiasm but at other times with apprehension. The smoothness of their transition into the workplace will depend upon several considerations: whether or not they will be paid, the length of their stay, their numbers, and their effect on the work organization. But underlying these considerations are the terms and conditions which govern the learners' participation. These terms and conditions concern the existing work force because some experiential programs have a potential for worker displacement.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Economic conditions and the employment picture influence worker attitudes. In times of high unemployment and competition for jobs, an uneasy climate surfaces. Workers, being concerned about keeping their jobs, become less receptive to bringing experiential learners onto the employment scene. When the employment picture brightens, these concerns seem to dissipate. These phenomena are understandable, but present some degree of a dilemma. When jobs are plentiful, youth seek employment directly; but when jobs are scarce, youth are likely to remain in school and/or to seek out experiential learning opportunities. Therefore, those who promote experiential education will have to reconcile the conflicts inherent in the employment picture. Of paramount importance are clear communication of program purposes and agreements that alleviate workers' concerns about displacement.

PAST EXPERIENCES

This problem area is not without a history. A number of experiential programs have flourished during periods of high unemployment, being successful because of the manner in which the cooperating organizations set the conditions for learner participation. However, there have been other instances where the situation was mishandled. Even though the AFL-CIO gave strong support to passage of the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA), many union leaders felt that MDTA tended to train in occupations where jobs did not exist and that it tended to break up occupations requiring apprenticeship. Now that MDTA has been replaced by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), similar problems still exist. Organized labor indicates that training under CETA is often offered in areas where there is an existing surplus of trained labor and that misuse of CETA has created substitution of workers by federally financed CETA employees.

COMMUNICATION AND AGREEMENTS

Since one of the purposes of experiential education is to assist youths in preparing for work and in securing satisfying, productive jobs, it is incongruous that some of these programs also have the prospect of displacing workers. Apparently, the early planning stages of some programs do not include representatives of all sectors affected by the program and do not develop the necessary agreements relevant to the worker-displacement issue. This is an oversight which inevitably results in unfortunate consequences for all concerned.

Guideline 10

THE PRESENCE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNERS IN THE WORKPLACE SHOULD NOT RESULT IN THE DISPLACEMENT OF WORKERS. IF THE WORK FORCE IS REDUCED WHILE A PROGRAM IS IN EFFECT, ANY REQUIRED REDUCTIONS IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNERS OR OTHER PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS SHOULD BE MADE ACCORDING TO TERMS AGREED UPON IN THE PLANNING STAGES.

RATIONALE

Because introducing experiential learners who will receive pay for work experiences can be a concern, assurance must be given that worker displacement will not occur. The assurance is essential to ensure positive relationships between the learners and the workers who will be their instructors. The prospect of reducing the number of learners or other program adjustments must be discussed in the planning stages, as well as determining the timing and other conditions related to such modifications. While this recommendation is particularly applicable to programs in which learners are paid, non-paying programs in the planning stages should also consider any possible changes. Any program in the paid employment sector is vulnerable when worker security is threatened.

SAFEGUARDS

- Experiential learners should clearly understand the relationships between learners and workers.
- All workers should be made aware of the purposes of the program and the conditions under which the learners are present in the workplace.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Workers will recognize that experiential learners are in the workplace primarily for educational purposes.
- Everyone will understand what conditions require increasing or decreasing the number of experiential learners and what conditions require other program modifications.

11 Legal Requirements

PURPOSE OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

There are many legal requirements having implications for experiential learners. These requirements, designed to protect youth from exploitation and to ensure their safety and welfare, should be carefully considered so that learners can benefit from full participation in experiential education.

IMPORTANCE OF INTERPRETATIONS

Those individuals who consider regulations (laws related to child labor, minimum wage, working hours and conditions) as barriers to the experiential programs want them relaxed. They argue that these regulations are antiquated and unduly restrictive. Others disagree. Studies reveal that such laws and regulations affect experiential education opportunities in the workplace to a slight degree. Even though the evidence is mixed, those involved with the programs tend to conclude that the effect on experiential education is not as negative as often presumed, but that the complexity and diversity of such regulations may result in interpretations that limit youth work experiences. What really needs to be investigated, then, is not so much the impact of legal requirements on the programs as the impact of inadequate knowledge about them.

Unions, in particular, are dedicated to the preservation of those laws which protect the rights of all workers, and they would in no way support loose interpretations of laws which would create displacement of employed workers or exploitation of youth.

There will continue to be those who advocate changing labor laws and regulations to open up opportunities for experiential learners, in inevitable conflict with those who believe in the preservation of these legal requirements.

UNDERSTANDING OR CHANGE?

A reasonable starting point is to gain a thorough understanding of the laws and regulations and the rationale for their existence. Since there are programs functioning effectively within these legal requirements, it seems that experiential education can flourish without change and that change, if it materializes, will evolve slowly with the support of all sectors of society.

Guideline 11

ALL PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMS SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND RAMIFICATIONS AS THEY APPLY TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNERS.

RATIONALE

Nothing destorys a program faster than infringement upon labor laws and regulations, but these legal requirements need not be viewed as barriers. There is enough latitude within the laws themselves to accommodate the educational activities of experiential programs. But there are definite limits that must be observed to protect the learners and these vary locally and regionally. Anyone involved in implementing experiential programs must follow the laws and regulations which affect much of the policy surrounding the programs.

SAFEGUARD

- Programs in which unpaid learners are engaged may be perceived as abusing labor laws and regulations if the learners' experiences are considered real work experiences for which others in the organization are paid. During the planning stages, clarification and documentation of the unpaid status of learners should be made.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Awareness of legal requirements will prevent undesirable consequences for the program.
- Awareness of legal requirements may open up opportunities previously not known to exist.

12 Paid Experiences

WHEN IS PAY APPROPRIATE?

Apparently, there are as many who argue that pay should be given to experiential learners as there are those who argue against it. Some deem it an incentive or reward for learning, as well as compensation for work; others think it unnecessary, detracting from the experience itself. Part of the dilemma in the "to pay or not to pay" debate is found in the difficult determination of what constitutes productive work in the learning experience. After the nature of the experiences is clarified, the determination of whether compensation is appropriate can be made.

It does not seem possible to make unilateral statements that can govern such considerations. These are matters to be determined for each situation in which the programs function and to be decided upon by persons involved in planning the experiences: labor and management, parents, teachers, administrators, learners, and program staff.

RESOLVING SALARY ISSUES

Federal and state child-labor regulations (for general and specific types of employment),working hours, registration of employed minors, and minimum wages determine to a large extent how salary issues will be resolved, but there is much confusion among participants regarding these regulations. These laws overlap and contain many special exceptions and conditions in both primary and secondary sources of youth employment. Therefore, all program participants must work together to achieve mutual agreement and equitable resolution of salary issues.

Guideline 12

SALARY ISSUES SHOULD BE COOPERATIVELY DECIDED UPON BY ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM, WORKING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE APPROPRIATE LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS.

RATIONALE

The consideration of wages for experiential education must be made by all parties involved in the program—labor and management representatives, teachers, administrators, program staff, and learners. Uppermost in the consideration are two factors: (1) protecting the agreed-upon wage of worker; and (2) assuring that there is no violation of fair-labor standards or collective bargaining agreements in the payment or nonpayment of learners.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will be appropriately compensated for work performed.
- Fair labor standards and collective bargaining agreements will not be violated.

13 Academic Credit

WHAT IS CREDITABLE?

If participation in an experiential education program has produced competencies ordinarily credited in an educational institution then it should be possible to get credit for them. However, not all competencies relate to an established school curriculum and, therefore, they may not appear to merit such credit. Consequently, the granting of credit also involves a judgment on the credibility of the experiences.

The National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education defines certification as:

> . . . a positive evaluation of a set of learning experiences—an individual is "certified" when he or she has completed a set of learning experiences which meet the standards set by the certifying agent. [Granting credit] is the process of giving a positive evaluation to a specific learning experience or set of skills.

From this definition it is clear that credentials cannot exist without the certifying agent. Who is the agent to grant education credits for experiential learning? The answer varies from state to state and within a state itself. By and large, though, secondary and postsecondary schools usually act as the certifying agents. The difficulty, however, is not who will do it but how.

HOW CREDIT IS AWARDED

Despite considerable debate in recent years, no method for awarding credit to experiential learners has been judged the best. Nevertheless, there are many schools that give academic credit for learning through experience and several existing models could be useful despite some disadvantages inherent in each. While these models offer hope, it appears that certifying agencies have yet to agree on a basis for accrediting experiential learning.

Academic credits are being awarded for a variety of educational experiences, and so it is becoming increasingly clear that traditional academic credits will be sharing their role with credits gained through experience.

DECISIONS TO GRANT CREDIT

There is one point, however, which cannot be argued. The decision to include credits as part of the experiential program is most appropriately made at the inception of a program through agreement between the program planners and a certifying agent; and, because teachers are instrumental in the awarding of acdemic credits, they, too, should be involved in this decision if the programs are to be successful.

Guideline 13

THE CRITERIA FOR GRANTING CREDIT TO LEARNERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS SHOULD BE AGREED UPON IN THE PLANNING STAGES BY TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, PROGRAM STAFF, AND THE AGENCY GRANTING THE CREDIT.

RATIONALE

Schools offering experiential programs should consider granting credit for competencies gained. Most do, but not all apply these credits toward graduation. It is important to recognize that many competencies can be gained by either in-school or out-of-school experiences. This recommendation addresses the need to recognize learning that takes place outside the school in accredited programs. The nature of the credit and the criteria for granting it will vary from program to program.

SAFEGUARD

- The means and procedures for determining whether competencies have been gained through experiential learning should be given careful consideration.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Individuals will have alternate strategies for acquiring academic credits.
- Schools will have a broad range of certificable experiences and competencies.
- Society will recognize out-of-school educational experiences designed for credit as an integral part of the school's curriculum.

14 Employment Credit

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT VALUE

Many schools now often grant academic credit for learning acquired through experiential education. In the market place, however, the situation is different. When experiential learners apply for regular employment, work experience acquired in experiential programs is not usually considered in employment decisions and in establishing rates of pay.

When learners fail to receive material compensation for their involvement in the learning programs, they may question the value of the programs and consider themselves no better off than non-program participants.

DECISIONS WILL VARY

However, there is wide diversity in types of experiential education programs and not all can result in monetary remuneration or other compensation in future jobs. These considerations will have to be determined at the local level for specific programs and in some instances for specific individuals.

Guideline 14

CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY LABOR AND MANAGEMENT.

RATIONALE

Many learners accumulate a substantial amount of experience in productive work through participation in experiential learning programs. They also acquire useful competencies for future employment. Employers and unions should give serious consideration to these factors when hiring experiential learners and establishing their employment position. However, specific decisions made in this regard will have to be worked out according to collective bargaining agreements and the nature of the particular employment situation.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Experiential learners will receive appropriate compensation for their work experience and skills.
- Experiential learners will realize the advantages gained from participation in experiential programs.

15 Preparation of Educational Personnel

NEED FOR APPROPRIATE PREPARATION

For most experiential learning programs, the educational function is carried out by professionally trained teachers or counselors, preferably those with experience in both education and industry. The education sector generally believes that the educational functions of society should be carried out by professionally qualified teachers and that education should remain in the control of public systems of education. However, most educators are trained to function in schools, not workplaces. Trying to use the same methods for experiential education as those used in schools, teachers often experience frustrations and disappointment. Therefore, as far as experiential education is concerned, their training needs to be supplemented.

Many educators with little or no contact with the business world lack information about the labor market. They also need special competencies to execute career-related programs. Program personnel, then, will require experiential education preservice and in-service training. They will need special knowledge: how linkages between agencies are established; how to communicate with noneducators on educational matters; how to guide learners through their program experiences, assisting them in interpretation; and how to assess achievement of program objectives.

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

One method of acquiring these skills is for program personnel to experience the work environments themselves through graduate programs designed to help educators make "the transition from school to workplaces." These programs will include supplemental training specifically designed to assist educators in executing their roles. The expense of such training should be borne by one or more of the participating organizations.

Guideline 15

EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE GIVEN A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORK SETTINGS, THE POTENTIAL OF THE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES, AND THEIR OWN ROLES IN ASSISTING THE LEARNERS TO ACHIEVE THE PROGRAM PURPOSES. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TRAINING, COMPENSATION, AND RECOGNITION OF ALL PERSONNEL WHO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.

RATIONALE

Extending educational environments beyond the school will be a new experience for many educators associated with the programs (teachers, school administrators, counselors, and program staff). In addition, many will have had little work experience in settings other than schools. For these reasons, educators in these programs must understand how to help learners prepare for the experiences, how to integrate the experiential learning with other educational experiences, and how to assist participants in processing the experiences. Educational personnel also need to have a good grasp of occupational information, business-world principles and operations, economics, labor laws, etc. Knowledge and skills such as these must be gained prior to involvement and must be maintained throughout the program.

SAFEGUARD

- Educational personnel should realize how an understanding of the work environment will be important for them; it enables educational personnel to be effective in interacting with labor and management representatives.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Learners will be supervised by knowledgeable persons who will help them get the most out of their experiences.
- Educational personnel will have credibility with representatives of work organizations.
- Educational personnel will understand how the total community can be used as a complete educational environment.

16 Preparation of Workplace Personnel

NEED FOR APPROPRIATE ORIENTATION

Workplace personnel spend much time with experiential learners. Therefore, it is important for them to know how they help the learners achieve program objectives. Perhaps the most effective facet of their role is to communicate who they are, what they do, and how they perceive the world. In this area, they can communicate what educators cannot.

The orientation of personnel from the workplace should provide all the information required to carry out program objectives. It should stress the importance of the worker's role and should preserve the personal entity each worker can contribute to the program.

MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

Programs that rely heavily on workers to serve as mentors, master craftspersons, or other "tutorial" agents must seriously consider how they can involve these workers in the conduct of the program. Many benefits may accrue from considerate and sincere involvement of workers in the various aspects of program implementation—not only for the learners, but for the workers themselves. And every effort should be made to recognize the important contributions that workers make.

Preservice and in-service training for personnel from the workplace should be conducted without disruptions to the work effort, and expenses for the training should be borne by one or more of the participating organizations.

Guideline 16

PERSONNEL FROM THE WORKPLACE WHO ARE CALLED UPON TO INTERACT WITH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNERS SHOULD RECEIVE COMPREHENSIVE ORIENTATION TO THEIR ROLES IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THESE WORKERS AND THE PROGRAM STAFF SHOULD BE MAINTAINED ON A SYSTEMATIC BASIS FOR THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAM. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADEQUATE TRAINING, COMPENSATION, AND RECOGNITION OF ALL PERSONNEL WHO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.

RATIONALE

Perhaps personnel from the workplace who are involved in the programs make the most critical contributions. In many ways they serve as role models for the experiential learners. While it is important that they maintain fidelity to their work roles, it is also important for them to be well informed about the program and what it is striving to accomplish. Further, they should play an active role in shaping the learning experiences. Theirs is a challenging and essential undertaking. All personnel associated with an experiential education program should be provided appropriate training, compensation, and recognition.

SAFEGUARDS

- Program staff and personnel from the workplace should interact often to assure that learner outcomes are achieved as a result of their respective roles.
- Orientation programs should be carefully planned and implemented to stimulate and facilitate the participation of workplace personnel.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Workers will be recognized for their program participation.
- Learners will receive beneficial assistance from personnel who understand their needs and interests.
- Educational personnel will have the assistance of workplace personnel who understand the program objectives and who can help learners achieve them.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

by Herbert A. Levine

The preceding guidelines are clearly drawn, comprehensible, and workable. They can be a basis for effective development of collaborative effort to meet the experiential learning needs of young people. They are not designed to be inflexible regulations, but rather it is hoped they will serve as significant guidelines which will make the tasks of the cooperating parties easier and more effective as they develop programs suited to local conditions.

Our group of representatives of labor, management, education, community, and government hotly debated the issues and prospective guidelines for over a year. The resulting consensus may require even further refinement in the crucible of experimentation and program development in the field. Although the guidelines have been reviewed by qualified practitioners, the advisory panel invites your comments and suggestions which should be sent to the National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

It will be to the advantage of all of us if we can introduce young people to the world of work in expeditious, harmonious, and effective ways.

APPENDIX—PART 1

Experiential Learning Issues and Guidelines
Program Coordinators and Students—Reactor Group Workshop

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
April 24-25, 1978

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APPENDIX—PART 2

Experiential Learning Issues and Guidelines
Policy Makers—Reactor Group Workshop

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
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